Eſhcol,

A Cluſter of the fruit of *Canaan*; brought to the Borders, for the encouragement of the Saints, travelling thitherward, with their faces towards *Syon*.

OR,

Rules of direction, for the walking of the Saints in Fellowſhip, according to the order of the Goſpel.

By *John Owen* D.D.D.

The ſecond Edition reviſed and corrected.

For ſo is the will of God that with well-doing ye may put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men. 1 Pet. 2. 15.

LONDON.
Printed for *Philemon Stephens*, and are to be ſold at his ſhop, at the ſign of the *Gilded Lyon* in S. *Pauls* Church yard, 1655.

An Advertiſement to the Reader.

THere are (Chriſtian Reader) certain principles in church affairs, generally conſented unto by all men, aiming at reformation; and the furtherance of the power of godlineſſe therein, however diverſified among themſelves by ſingular perſwaſions, or diſtinguiſhed by impoſed and aſſumed names and Titles; Some of theſe, though not here mentioned, are the bottom and foundation of this following collection of

rules for our walking in the fellowſhip of the Goſpel: amongſt which, theſe four are the principall:

Firſt, That particular Congregations or Aſſemblies of believers, gathered into one body, for a participation of the ordinances of Jeſus Chriſt, under officers of their own, are of Divine inſtitution.

Secondly, That every faithfull believer is bound by vertue of poſitive precepts, to joyn himſelf to ſome ſuch ſingle Congregation, having the notes and marks whereby a true Church may be known and diſcerned.

Thirdly, That every man's own voluntary conſent, and ſubmiſſion to the ordinances of

Chriſt

Christ in that Church whereunto he is joyned, is required for his union therewith, and fellowship therein.

Fourthly, That it is convenient that all believers of one place should joyn themselves in one Congregation, unlesse through their being too numerous, they are by common consent distinguished into more: which order cannot be disturbed without danger, strife, emulation, and breach of love.

These principles, evident in the word, cleer in themselves, and own'd in the main by all pretending to regular Church-reformation, not liable to any colourable exception from the Scripture, or pure Antiquity,

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were supposed and taken for granted, at the collection of these ensuing rules.

The Apostolicall direction and precept in such cases is, that whereunto we have attained, we should walk according to the same rule; unto whose performance the promise annexed is, that if any one be otherwise minded, God will also reveal that unto him. The remaining differences about Church Order and Discipline, are for continuance so Ancient, and by the disputes of men, made so involved and intricate; the parties at variance so prejudiced and engaged, that although all things of concernment appear to me as to others, both consenting with me, and

dissenting

dissenting from me, clear in the Scriptures; yet I have little hopes of the accomplishment of the promise in revelation of the truth, as yet contested about in men differently minded; until the obedience of walking suitably and answerably to the same rules agreed on, be more sincerely accomplished.

This perswasion is the more firmly fixed on me every day, because I see men, for the most part, to spend their strength and time, more in the opposing of those things wherein others differ from them, then in the practice of those which by themselves and others are owned, as of the most necessary concernment; To recall the minds

of men, at leaſt of thoſe, who having not much light to judge of things under debate (eſpecially conſidering their way of handling in their diſputing age) may have yet much heat, and love, towards the wayes of Goſpel obedience, from the intanglements of controverſies about Church affairs, and to engage them into a ſerious humble performance of thoſe duties, which are by the expreſſe command of Jeſus Chriſt incumbent on them in what way of order they walk are theſe leaves deſigned. I ſhall onely adde, that though the enſuing Rules, or directions, may be obſerved, and the Duties pre-

ſcribed

ſcribed, performed, with much beauty, and many advantages by thoſe who are ingaged in ſome reformed Church ſociety yet, they are (if not all of them, yet) for the moſt part ſuch, as are to be the conſtant practiſe of all Chriſtians in their dayly converſation, though they are not perſwaded, of the neceſſity of any ſuch Reformation, as is pleaded for, and herein I am fully reſolved, that the practice of any one duty here mentioned, by any one ſoul before neglected, ſhall be an abundant recompence for the publiſhing my name with theſe papers, ſavouring ſo little of

thoſe

thoſe ornaments of Art or Learning, which in things that come to publick view, men deſire to hold out.

Errata.

25.l.4.r.revile d.28.l.10.r.one.34.l.10.r.the Saints 37.li.18.r.ſcandall, . li.20.r.haſt, 118.l.24.r. no more. 64

Rules

Rules of walking in fellowship, with reference to the Paſtor or Miniſter that watcheth for our ſouls.

RULE. I.

THE word and all ordinances diſpenſed in the adminiſtration to him committed, by vertue of Miniſterial authority, are to be diligently attended and ſubmitted unto, with ready obedience in the Lord.

1 Cor. 4. 1. *Let a man ſo account of us, as of the Miniſters of Chriſt, and ſtewards of the myſteries of God.*

2 Cor. 5. 18, 20. *God hath committed unto us the Miniſtery of reconciliation: now then we are Embaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us*, 2 Cor. 4. 7. *We have this treaſure in earthen veſſels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us*; See 2 Cor. 6. 1.

Gal. 4. 14. *You received me as an Angel of God, even as Jeſus Chriſt*,

2 Theſſ. 3. 14. *and if any man obey not our words, note that man, and have no company with him.*

Heb. 13. 7. *Remember them that have the rule over you, who have ſpoken to you the word of God:* Verſ. 13. *Obey them that have the rule over you, and ſubmit your ſelves, for they watch for your ſouls, as they that muſt give an account, that they may do*

do it with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you.

EXPLICATION I.

THere is a two-fold power for the diſpenſing of the Word, 1. δύναμις, or ability. 2. ἐξουσία or authority: the firſt with the attending qualifications mentioned and recounted, 1 *Tim.* 3.2,3,4,5,6,7. *Tit.* 1. 6,7,8. And many other places, is required to be previouſly in thoſe, as beſtowed on them, who are to be called to office of Miniſtration, and may be in ſeverall degrees and meaſures in ſuch as are never ſet apart thereunto, who thereby are warranted to declare the Goſpel, when called by the providence of God thereunto. *Rom.* 10.14,15. For the work

of Preaching unto the conversion of ſouls, being a morall duty, comprized under that generall precept of doing good unto all, the appointment of ſome to the performance of that work by the way of office, doth not encloſe it.

The ſecond, or Authority proper to them who orderly are ſet apart thereunto, ariſeth from

1. Chriſts inſtitution of the office, *Eph.*4.11.

2. Gods providentiall deſignation of the perſons *Mat.* 9.38.

3. The Churches call, Election, appointment, acceptation, ſubmiſſion. *Gal.*4.14. *Acts* 14. 23. 1 *Theſ.*5.12, 13, *Acts* 6.3. 2 *Cor.*8.5. which do not give them dominion over the faith of believers, 2 *Cor.* 1.24. nor make them Lords over Gods heritage,

heritage, 1 *Pet.* 5. 3. but entruſt them with a ſtewardly power in the houſe of God, 1 *Cor.* 4. 12. that is, the peculiar flock over which, in particular, they are made overſeers: *Acts* 20. 28. of whom the word is to be received,

1 As the truth of God, as alſo from all others ſpeaking according to Goſpel-order in his name.

2 As the truth held out with miniſterial authority to them in particular, according to the inſtitution of Chriſt, want of a due conſideration of theſe things, lies at the bottom of all that negligence, careleſneſs, ſloth, and wantonneſſe in hearing, which have poſſeſſed many profeſſors in theſe days. There is nothing but a reſpect to the truth, and Authority of God in the adminiſtration

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of the word, that will eſtabliſh the mindes of men, in a ſober and profitable attending unto it. Neither are men weary of *hearing* untill they are weary of practiſing.

Motives to the obſervance of this rule, are;

1. The name wherein they ſpeak and adminiſter, 2 *Cor.* 5. 20 2. The work which they do, 1 *Cor.* 3. 9. 2 *Cor.* 6. 1. 1 Tim. 4. 16.

3. The return that they make. *Heb.* 13. 17.

4. The Regard that the Lord hath of them in his employment, *Math.* 10. 40, 41, 42. *Luke* 10. 16.

5. The account that hearers muſt make of the word diſpenſed by them. 2 *Cron.* 36. 15, 16. *Prov.* 1. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29. *Pſal.* 1 8. 2. *Luke* 10 16. *Mark* 4. 24. *Heb.* 2. 1, 2, 3, *Heb.* 4. 2.

RULE

RULE. II.

HIs converſation is to be obſerved, and dilgently followed, ſo far as he walks in the ſteps of *Jeſus Chriſt.*

1 Cor. 4. 16. I *beſeech you be followers of me,* Ch. 11. 1. *Be ye followers of me, even as* I *alſo am of Chriſt.*

Heb. 13. 7 *Remember them who have ſpoken unto you the Word of God, whoſe faith follow, conſidering the end of their converſation.*

2 Theſ. 3. 7. *For your ſelves know how you ought to follow us, for we behaved not our ſelves diſorderly among you.*

Phil. 3. 17. *Brethren be followers together of me, and mark them which walk ſo as you have us for an example.*

1 Tim. 4. 12. *Be thou an ex-*

ample of the beleevers in word, in converſation, in charity, in ſpirit, in faith, in purity.

1 Pet. 5. 3. Be *enſamples to the flock.*

EXPLICAT. II.

THat an exemplar converſation was ever required in the diſpenſers of holy things both under the Old Teſtament and New, is apparent: the glorious veſtments of the old miniſtring Prieſts, the ſoundneſſe and integrity of their perſon, without maim, imperfection or blemiſh, *Urim* and *Thummim*, with many other ornaments, though primitively typical of Jeſus Chriſt, yet did not obſcurely ſet out the purity and holineſs required in the adminiſtrators themſelves, *Zech.* 3.4. in the new, The

ſhining

ſhining of their light in all good works, *Matth.* 5. 16. is eminently exacted: and this not only, that no offence be taken at the wayes of God, and his worſhip by them adminiſtred, as hath fallen out in the Old Teſtament, *Sam.* 2. 17. and in the New, *Phil.* 3. 18, 19. but alſo that thoſe who are without may be convinced 1 *Tim.* 3 7: and the Churches directed in the practiſe of all the will and minde of God by them revealed; as in the places cited. A Paſtors life ſhould be vocal: Sermons muſt be practiſed, as well as preached; Though *Noahs* Work-men built the Arke, yet themſelves were drowned; God will not accept of the tongue, where the Devil hath the ſoul. Jeſus did do and teach. *Acts* 1. 1. If a man teach uprightly, and

walk crookedly, more will fall down in the night of his life, then be built in the day of his Doctrine.

Now as to the compleating of the exemplary life of a Miniſter, it is required, that the principle of it, be that of the life of Chriſt in him, *Gal.*2.20. that when he hath taught others, he be *not himſelf a caſt-away*, 2 *Cor.*9.27. with which he hath a ſpiritual *underſtanding*, and light given him into the Counſel of God, which he is to communicate, 1 *Joh.* 5.20. 1 *Cor.*2.12,16. 2 *Cor.*4. 6,7. and that the courſe of it be ſingular, *Math.*5. 46. Luk. 6.32. whereunto ſo many eminent qualifications of the perſon, & duties of converſation are required, 1 *Tim.* 2,3, 4,5,6. &c. *Titus*, 1.6,7,8,9, and his aime to be *exemplar*

to

to the glory of God 1 *Tim.* 4. 12. ſo is their general courſe, and the end of their faith to be eyed.

Heb. 13. 7. and their infirmities whilſt really ſuch, & appearing through the manifold temptations whereunto they are in theſe dayes expoſed; or impoſed on them through the zeal of their adverſaries, that contend againſt them, to be covered with love; *Gal* 4. 12. 13. & this men wil do, when they conſcientiouſly conſider, that even the lives of their teachers are an ordinance of God, for their relief under temptations, and provocation unto holineſs, zeal, meekneſſe, and ſelf-denial.

RULE. III.

PRayer and ſupplications are continually to be made on

on his behalf, for assistance and successe in the Work committed to him.

Ephes. 6. 18, 19. *Pray alwayes with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, for me, that utterance may be given me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel, for which* I *am an Embassador.* 2 Thess. 3. 1, 2. *Brethren pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified, and that we may be delivered from the hands of unreasonable and wicked men.* 1 Thes. 5. 25. Col. 4. 3. *Praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ,* Heb. 13. 18.

Act. 12. 5. *Prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him,* Heb. 13. 7.

EXPLI-

EXPLICAT. III.

THE greatneſſe of the work; for which who is ſufficient? 2 *Cor.*2.16. The ſtrength of the oppoſition, which lies againſt it, 1 *Cor.*16. 9.*Revel.*12.12. 1 *Tim.*4.3,4,5. the concernment of mens ſouls therein, *Acts* 20.26,27,28. *Heb.*13.7. 1 *Tim.*4.16. The conviction which is to be brought upon the world thereby, *Ezek.* 2.5. 1 *Cor.* 1.23. 2*cor.*3.15,16. its aym and tendency, to the glory of God in Chriſt, call aloud for the moſt effectuall daily concurrence of the *Saints* in their ſupplications for their ſupportment. That theſe are to be for aſſiſtance, incouragement, abilities, ſucceſſe, deliverance, and protection is proved in the Rule.

Rule. As their temptations are multiplyed, ſo ought prayers in their behalf. They have many curſes of men againſt them, *Jere.*15.10. it is hoped, that God hears ſome prayers for them: when many are not aſhamed to revile them in publick, ſome ought to be aſhamed, not to remember them in private.

Motives.

1. The word will doubtleſſe be effectuall, when ability for its adminiſtration is a return of prayers, *Act.*10.30,31.

2. The Miniſters failing is the peoples puniſhment, *Acts* 8.11. *Iſa.*30.20.

3. His prayers are continually for the Church. *Iſa.*62. 7.8. *Rom.*1.9 &c.

4. That for which he ſtands in ſo much need of prayers, is the Saints good, and not peculiarly

liarly his own. Help him who carries the burthen, 1 *Tim.*3. 8.*Phil.*2.17 *Col.*1.24.

RULE IV.

REverentiall eſtimation of him with ſubmiſſion unto him for his works ſake.

1 Cor. 4.1. *Let a man ſo account of us as of the Miniſters of Chriſt, and Stewards of the myſteries of God.*

1 Theſ. 5. 12. *And we beſeech you Brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admoniſh you, verſ.* 13. *And to eſteem them very highly in love for their works ſake.*

1 Tim.5.17. *Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, eſpecially they who labour in the word and doctrine.*

1 Pet.5.

1 Pet. 5. 5. *Submit your ſelves to the Elders.*

Heb. 13. 17. *Obey them that have the rule over you, and ſubmit your ſelves.*

EXPLICAT. IV.

THE reſpect and eſtimation here required, is civil, the motive ſacred whence the honor of the Miniſter is the grace of the Church, and the regard to him a Goſpel-duty acceptable to God in Chriſt: 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. honor & reverence is due only to eminency in ſome kind or other; This is given to paſtors, by their emploiment; proved by their Titles, they are called *Angels*, *Revel.* 1. 26. *Heb.* 12. 22. *Biſhops* or overſeers, *Ezek.* 3. 17. *Acts* 20. 28. 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. *Stewards*, 1 *Cor.* 4. 1. *Titus* 1. 7. *Men of God.* 1 *Sam.* 2.

1 *Sam.*2.27. 1 *Tim* 6.11. *Rulers, Heb.*13.7,17. *Lights, Mat.* 5.14. *Salt, Matth.* 5.13. *Fathers,* 1 *Cor.*4.15. And by many more ſuch like terms are they deſcribed; if under theſe notions they honor God as they ought, God will alſo honor them as he hath promiſed: And his people are in conſcience to eſteem them highly for their works ſake; but if any of them be fallen Angels, thrown-down Stars, negligent Biſhops, treacherous ambaſſadors, Lordly-revelling-Stewards, Tyrannicall or fooliſh Rulers, blind Guids, unſavory Salt, inſatiate Dogs, the Lord and his people ſhall abhor them, and cut them off in a moneth. *Zech.*11.8.

RULE. V.

MAintenance for them and their Families, by the

the administration of earthly things, sutable to the state and condition of the Churches, is required for their Pastors.

1 Tim. 5. 17, 18. *Let the Elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who Labour in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture saith, thou shalt not muzzle the oxe that treadeth out the corne, for the labourer is worthy of his reward.*

Gal. 6. 6. *Let him that is taught in the word, communicate to him that teacheth in all good things:* vers. 7. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for what a man soweth, that shall he reap.*

1 Cor. 9. 7. *Who goeth a warfare at any time at his own charges? Who planteth a Vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit there-*

thereof? Who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? verſe 9. *It is written in the Law of* Moſes, *Thou ſhalt not muzzle the mouth of the Oxe that treadeth out the corne; doth God take care for Oxen?* verſe 10. *Or ſaith he it altogether for our ſakes? for our ſakes no doubt, this is written, that he that ploweth ſhould plow in hope, and he which threſheth in hope, ſhould be made partaker of his hope,* Verſe 11. *If we have ſowen unto you ſpirituall things, is it a great thing, if we ſhall reap your carnall things?* Verſe 13. *Do not you know, that they which miniſter about holy things, live of the things of the Temple, and they that wait at the Altar, are partakers with the Altar,* verſ. 14. *Even ſo hath the Lord appointed, that they which preach*

the

the Goſpel ſhould live of the Goſpel, Matth. 10. 9. 10. *Provide neither gold, nor ſilver, nor braſſe in your purſes; Nor ſcrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither ſhoes, nor yet ſtaves: for the Workman is worthy of his meat.*

Add to theſe and the like places, the Analogie of the Primitive allowance in the Church of the Iews.

EXPLIC. V.

IT is a promiſe to the Church under the Goſpel, that Kings ſhould be her nurſing Fathers, and Queens her nurſing Mothers, *Iſa.* 49. 23. To ſuch it belongs principally to provide food and protection for thoſe committed to them; the fruit of this promiſe the Churches in many ages have enjoyed:

ed: Laws by ſupream and Kingly power have been enacted; giving portions and granting priviledges to Churches and their paſtors. It is ſo in many places, in the dayes wherein we live; on this ground where equitable and righteous Laws have allowed a ſupportment in earthly things, to the Paſtors of Churches, ariſing from ſuch as may receive ſpiritual benefit by their labor in the Goſpel; it is thankfully to be accepted and embraced, as an iſſue of Gods providence for the good of his. Beſides, our Saviour warranteth his Diſciples to take and eat of their things, by their conſent, to whomſoever the word is preached, *Luk.* 10. 8. But it is not alwayes thus; theſe things may ſometimes fail; wherefore the continual care, and frequently the bur-

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den, or rather labor of love in providing for the Paſtors, lies, as in the Rule, upon the Churches themſelves, which they are to do in ſuch a manner as is ſutable to the condition wherein they are, and the increaſe given them of God. This the whole in general, and each Member in particular is obliged unto; for which they have as Motives,

1. Gods appointment, as in the Texts cited.

2. The neceſſity of it; how ſhall he go on warfare, if he be troubled about the neceſſities of this life: they are to give themſelves wholy to the Work of the Miniſtry, 1 *Tim.* 4. 15.

Other works had need to be done for them.

3. The equity of the duty; our Saviour and the apoſtles plead

plead it out from grounds of equity and juſtice, and all kinds of Laws and rules of Righteouſneſſe, among all ſorts of men, *Matth.* 10. 10. 1 *Cor.* 9. 10. Allowing proportionable rectitude in the way of recompence to it with the wages of the Laborer, which to detain is a crying ſin *Iam.* 5. 4. 5. The wretched endeavors of men of corrupt mindes, to rob and ſpoile them of all, that by the providence of God, on any other account, they are righteouſly poſſeſſed of.

RULE. VI.

ADhering to him, and abiding by him in all trials & perſecutions for the Word.

2. Tim. 4. 16. *At my firſt anſwer no man ſtood with me, but all men forſook me, I pray God*

God that it may not be laid to their charge.

2 *Tim.* 1. 16. *The Lord ſhew mercy to the houſe of* Oneſiphorus, *for he oft refreſhed me, and was not aſhamed of my chaines.* V. 17. *But when he was in* Rome, *he ſought me out very diligently, and found me.* V. 18. *The Lord grant unto him, that he may finde mercy in that day; and in how many things he miniſtred to me at* Epheſus, *thou knoweſt very well.*

EXPLIC. VI.

A Common cauſe ſhould be carried on by common aſſiſtance; that which concerneth all ſhould be ſupported by all; when perſecution ariſeth for the words ſake, generally it begins with the leaders; 1 *Pet.* 4. 17, 18. the common

mon way to ſcatter the ſheep, is by ſmiting the ſhepheards. *Zec.* 13.7,8. It is for the Churches ſake he is revealed and perſecuted 2 *Tim.* 2. 10. *Col.* 1. 24. and therefore it is the Churches duty to ſhare with him, and help to bear his burthen. All the fault in ſcattering Congregations, hath not been in Miniſters: The people ſtood not by them in their trial; the Lord lay it not to their charge. The Captain is betrayed, and forced to mean conditions with his Enemy, who going on, with aſſurance of being followed by his Souldiers, looking back in the entrance of danger, he finds them al run away; in *England* uſually, no ſooner had perſecution laid hold of a Miniſter, but the people willingly received another: perhaps a Wolf inſtead of a Shepheard; ſhould a wife for-

ſake her husband, becauſe he is come in trouble for her ſake? when a known duty in ſuch a relation is incumbent upon a man, Is the crime of a back-ſlider in ſpititual things leſs? Whileſt a Paſtor lives, if he ſuffer for the truth, the Church cannot deſert him, nor ceaſe the performance of all required duties, without horrid contempt of the ordinances of Jeſus Chriſt. This is a burden that is commonly laid on the ſhoulders of miniſters, that for no cauſe whatſoever they muſt remove from their charge, when thoſe that lay it on, will oftentimes freely leave them and their miniſtry without any cauſe at all.

RULE VII.

GAthering together in the Aſſembly upon hisappointment,

ment, with theirs, joyned with him.

Acts 14.27. *When they were come, and had gathered the Church together.*

These are some of the Heads wherein the Churches duty consisteth towards him or them, that are set over it in the Lord; by all means giving them encouragement to the work, saying also unto them, *take heed to the Ministry you have received, that you fulfill it in the Lord,* Col. 4. 17 For what concerneth other Officers, may easily be deduced hence by analogie and proportion.

Rules to be observed by those who walk in fellowship, and considered to stir up their remembrance in things of mutual duty one towards another, which consisteth in,

RULE I.

AFfectionate sincere love in all things without dissimulation towards another, like that which Christ bare to his Church.

Io. 15. 12. *This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.*

Jo. 13. 34. *A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.* V. 35. *By this shall all men know, that you are my Disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

Rom. 13. 8. *Owe nothing to any*

any man, but to love one another, he that loveth another fulfilleth the law.

Eph. 5. 2. *walk in love, as Chriſt alſo hath loved us.*

1 Theſ. 3. 12. *The Lord make you to increaſe and abound in love one towards another,*

1 Theſ. 4. 9. *Your ſelves are taught of God to love one another.*

Pet. 1. 22. *Seeing ye have purified your ſoules in obeying the truth through the ſpirit, unto unfaigned love of the brethren, ſee that ye love one another, with a pure heart fervently.*

1 Jo. 4. 21. *And this commandement we have from him, that he who loveth God, do love his brother alſo.*

Rom. 12. 10. *Be kindly affectioned one to another in brotherly love.*

EXPLIC. I.

LOve is the fountain of all duties, towards God and man. *Matth.* 22. 3, 7. the ſubſtance of all rules, that concern the Saints; the bond of communion; the fulfilling of the Law; Rom. 13, 8, 9. 10. the advancement of the honor of the Lord Jeſus, and the glory of the Goſpel. The primitive Chriſtians had a proverbial ſpeech, received, as they ſaid from Chriſt; never rejoyce but when thou ſeeſt thy brother in love; and it was common among the Heathens concerning them, ſee how they love one another, from their readineſſe for the accompliſhment of that royal precept of laying down their lives for the brethren; its the fountain-rule, ſcope, ayme, and fruit of Goſpel-communion: and of no one thing of preſent performance, is the doctrine of the

the Lord Jeſus more eximious, and eminent above all other directions then in this, of mutuall, intenſe, effectionate love amongſt his followers, for which he gives them innumerable precepts, exhortations, and motives, but above all, his own heavenly example: to treat of love in its cauſes, nature, ſubject, fruits, effects, tendency, eminency, and exaltation, or, but to repeat the places of Scripture wherein theſe things are mentioned, would not ſuit with our preſent intention; only it may be plainly affirmed, that if there were no cauſe beſides, of reformation and walking in fellowſhip, but this one, that thereby the power and practice of this grace, ſhamefully to the diſhonor of Chriſt and his Goſpel loſt amongſt thoſe who call themſelves Chriſtians might be

recovered, it were abundantly enough to give encouragement for the undertaking of it, notwithſtanding any oppoſitions; now this love is a ſpiritual grace, wrought by the Holy Ghoſt, *Gal.* 5.22. in the hearts of believers, 1 *Pet.* 1. 22. whereby their ſoules are carried out: 1 *Theſſ.* 2.8. to ſeek the good of the children of God, as ſuch, *Phi.* 5. *Eph.* 1.15. *Heb* 13.11. uniting the heart unto the object ſo beloved, attended with joy, delight and complacency in their good: The motives unto love, and the ground of its inforcement from,

1. The command of God, and nature of the whole law, whereof Love is the accompliſhment, *Lev.* 19.34. *Mat.* 19.19. *Rom.* 13. 9,10.

2. the Eternall peculiar, diſtinguiſhing, fruitful love of God toward believers, and the end aymed

aimed at therein by him; *Eze* 16. 8. *Deut.* 1.8. *ch.* 33.3. *Zeph.* 3.17. *Rom.* 5.8. *Epheſ.* 1.4.

3. The intenſe, inexpreſſible love of Jeſus Chriſt, in his whole humiliation and laying down his life for us, expreſly propoſed as an example unto us, *Cant.* 3.10. *Joh.* 15.13. *Epheſ.* 5.2.

4. The eminent renuall of the old command of love, with ſuch new inforcements that it is called a new commandment, and peculiarly the Law of Chriſt; *Joh.* 13.34. 15.12. 1 *Theſ.* 4.9. 2 *Joh.* 5.

5. The ſtate & condition of the perſon between whom this duty is naturally to be exerciſed, as

1. Children of one father, *Mat.* 23.8.

2. Members of one body, 1 *Cor.* 12.12,13.

3. Partakers of the ſame hope, *Epheſ.* 4.4.

4. Objects of the same hate of the world, 1 *Joh.*3.13.

6. The eminency of this Grace.

1. In its self, and divine nature,*Col.*2.2.1 *Joh.*4.7. 1 *Cor.*13.

2. In its usefulness, *Prov.*10.12.*ch.*15.17.*Gal.*5.13.*Heb.*13.1.

3. In its acceptance with self-pleasing, *Ephes.* 1.15. *Psal.* 5. 1 *Cor.*13.

7. The impossibility of performing any other duty without it.*Gal.*5.6.1 *Thes.*1.3.1 *Joh.* 4.20.

8. The great sin of want of love, with all its aggravations; *Mat.*24.12.1 *Ioh.*3.14,15. And the like, are so many, and of such various consideration as not now to be insisted on.

Love, which is the bond of communion, maketh out it self, and is peculiarly exercised in these things following;

RULE.

RULE II.

COntinuall prayer for the proſperous ſtate of the Church, in Gods protection towards it.

Pſal. 122. 6. *Pray for the peace of Jeruſalem, they ſhall proſper that love thee.*

Phil. 1. 4. *Alwayes in every prayer of mine for you all, making requeſt with joy,* ver. 5. *For your fellowſhip in the Goſpel from the firſt day untill now.*

Rom. 1. 9. *Without ceaſing I make mention of you all in my prayer.*

Acts 12. 5. Peter *was kept in priſon, but prayer was made without ceaſing of the Church unto God for him.*

Iſai. 62. 6. *Ye that make mention of the Lord keep not ſilence:* verſe 7. *And give him*

no rest till he eſtabliſh, and till he make Jeruſalem *a praiſe in the earth.*

Epheſ 6.18. *Praying alwayes with all prayer and ſupplication in the ſpirit, and watching thereunto with all perſeverance and ſupplication for all Saints.*

Col. 4. 12. Epaphras *who is one of you, a ſervant of Chriſt, ſaluteth you, alwayes labouring fervently for you in prayers, that you may ſtand perfect and compleat in all the will of God.*

EXPLIC. II.

PRayer, as it is the great engine whereby to prevail with the Almighty, *Iſai.* 45.11. ſo it is the ſure refuge of the Saints at all times, both in their own behalf, *Pſal.* 61. 2. and alſo of others, *Acts* 12.4. It is a benefit

benefit which the pooreſt beleever may beſtow, and the greateſt Potentate hath no power to refuſe; this is the beaten way of the ſouls communion with God, for which the Saints have many gracious promiſes of aſſiſtance, *Zech.* 12.10. *Rom.* 8. 26. innumerable precepts for performance *Matth.*7.7.1 *Theſ.* 5. 17. 1 *Tim.*2. 8. with encouragements thereunto, *Ja.* 1.5. *Luke* 11.9. with precious promiſes of acceptance, *Matth.*21. 22. *Jo.* 16.24. *Pſal.*51.15. By all which, and divers other wayes, The Lord hath abundantly teſtified his delight in this ſacrifice of his people; now as the Saints are bound to pray for all men, of what ſort ſoever, 1 *Tim.* 2.1, 2. unleſſe they are ſuch as ſin unto death. 1 *Jo.*5.16 yea for their perſecuters *Mat.* 5.44. and them that hold them

in bondage, *Jer.*29.7. ſo moſt eſpecially for all Saints, 1 *Phil.* 1.4. and peculiarly for thoſe with whom they are in fellowſhip, *Col.* 4. 12. The Lord having promiſed, that upon every dwelling place, and all the aſſemblies of *Mount Sion*, that there ſhall be a cloud of ſmoke by day, and a ſhining of a flaming fire by night, *Iſa.*4.5. it is every ones duty to pray, for its accompliſhment; he is not worthy of the priviledges of the Church, who continues not in prayer, for a defence upon that glory: prayer then for the good, proſperity, flouriſhing, peace, increaſe, edification, and protection of the Church, is a duty every day required of all the members thereof.

1. Eſtimation of the Ordinances.

2. Concernment of Gods glory. 3. The

3. The honour of Jesus Christ.

4. Our own benefit and spiritual interest.

With the expressenes of the command, are sufficient Motives hereunto.

RULE. III.

EArnest striving and contending in all lawful wayes, by doing and suffering for the purity of the ordinances, honour, liberty and priviledges of the Congregation, being joyntly assistant against opposers, and common adversaries.

Jude 3. *And exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the Saints.*

Heb. 12. 3. *For consider him that endured such contradictions of sinners against himself, lest*

ye be wearied, and faint in your minds. V. 4. *ye have not resisted unto blood, striving against sinne.*

1. Jo. 3. 16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*

Gal. 5. 1. *Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not intangled again with the yoke of bondage.*

V. 13. *For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty.*

1 Cor. 7. 23. *Ye are bought with a price, be ye not the servants of men.*

Cant. 6. 4. *Thou art beautiful O my love, terrible as an Army with banners.*

1 Pet. 3. 15. *Be ready alwayes to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope*

hope that is in you, with meekneſs and fear.

EXPLIC. III.

THe former Rule concerned our dealing with God, in the behalf of the *Church*; This our dealing with men; to the right performance hereof many things are required; as

1. Diligent labouring in the Word, with fervent prayer, to acquaint our ſelves with the minde and will of God, concerning the way of worſhip which we profeſſe, and the rules of walking, which we deſire to practiſe, that ſo we may be able to give an account to humble enquirers, and ſtop the mouths of ſtubborn oppoſers; according to our knowledge, ſuch will be our valuation of the ordinances we enjoy:

a man will not contend unleſe he knows his title.

2. An eſtimation of all the aſperſions caſt on, and injuries done to the Church to be Chriſts, and alſo our own; Chriſt wounded through the ſides of his ſervants, and his wayes; and if we are of his, though the blow light not immediately on us, we are not without pain: all ſuch reproaches and rebukes fall on us.

3. Juſt vindication of the Church againſt calumnies, and falſe imputations; who can endure to hear his parents in the fleſh falſly traduced? And ſhall we be ſenſeleſſe of her reproaches who bears us unto Chriſt?

4. Joynt refuſall of ſubjection, with all Goſpel-oppoſition to any perſons or things; who contrary to, or beſides the

the word, under what name ſoever, do labour for power over the Church, to the abridging of it, of any of thoſe liberties and priviledges, which it claimeth as part of the purchaſe of Chriſt; to them that would enthrall us, we are not to give place, no not for an hour.

RULE IV.

SEdulous care and endeavouring for the preſervation of Unity, both inparticular and in generall.

Philip. 2.1. *If there be therefore any conſolation in Chriſt, if any comfort of love, if any fellowſhip of the ſpirit, if any bowels and mercies*; ver. 2. *Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the ſame love, being of one accord, of one mind.* verſ. 3. *Let nothing be done through ſtrife or vainglory, but in lowlineſſe of mind, let*

let each eſteem others better th themſelves.

Epheſ. 4. 3 *Indeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace.* verſ. 4. *There is one body and one ſpirit, &c.*

1 Cor. 1. 10. *Now I beſeech you brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye all ſpeak the ſame thing, and that there be no diviſions among you; but that ye be perfectly joyned together in the ſame mind and in the ſame judgement.*

2 Cor. 13. 11. *Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace ſhall be with you.*

Rom. 14. 19. *Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edifie another.*

Rom. 15. 5. *Now the God of patience and conſolation, grant you to be like-minded one towards another, &c.*

1 Cor. 6.

1 Cor.6.5. *Is it ſo, that there is not a wiſe man amongſt you, no you, no not one that ſhall be able to judge between his brethren, but brother goeth to law with brother; Now therefere there is utterly a fault among you.*

Acts 4.32. *And the multitude of them that believed, were of one heart and one ſoul.*

EXPLIC. IV.

VNion is the main aime and moſt proper fruit of love, neither is there any thing, or duty of the Saints in the Goſpel, preſſed with more earneſtneſſe, and vehemency of exhortation, then this. Now *Unity* is threefold, Firſt, purely ſpirituall, by the participation of the ſame Spirit of Grace; communication in the ſame Chriſt, one head to all. This we have with all the Saints in the world, in what condition

dition ſoever they be ; yea, with thoſe that are departed, Sitting down in the Kingdom of Heaven, with *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*. Secondly, Eccleſiaſtical or church-communion ; in the participation of Ordinances, according to the order of the Goſpel : This is a fruit and branch of the former ; oppoſed to Schiſme, Diviſions, Rents, evil ſurmiſings, ſelf-practiſes, cauſleſs differences in judgement in ſpirituall things concerning the Kingdom of Chriſt, with whatſoever elſe goeth off from cloſeneſſe of affection, oneneſſe of mind, conſent in judgement to the form of wholeſome words, conformity of practice to the Rule; and this is that which in the churches, and among them, is ſo earneſtly preſſed , commanded, deſired, as the glory of Chriſt, the honor of the Goſpel, the

the joy and crown of the Saints. Thirdly, civil unity, or an agreement in things of this life, not contending with them, nor about them, every one ſeeking the welfare of each other. Striving is unſeemly for Brethren; why ſhould they contend about the world, who ſhall joyntly judge the world?

Motives to the preſervation of both theſe, are

1. The remarkable earneſtneſſe of Chriſt and his Apoſtles in their prayers for, and precepts of this duty.

2. The certain diſhonour to the Lord Jeſus, all to the Goſpel, ruine to the Churches, ſhame and ſorrow to the Saints, that the neglect of it is accompanied withall *Gal.* 5.15.

3. The gracious iſſues, and ſweet heavenly conſolation, which attendeth a right obſervance of them. 4. The

4. The many fearfull aggravations wherewith the ſin of renting the Body of Chriſt, is attended.

5. The ſad contempt and prophanation of Ordinances, which want of this hath brought upon many churches; For a right performance of this duty, we muſt,

1. Labour by Prayer and Faith, to have our hearts and ſpirits throughly ſeaſoned with that affectionate love, which our firſt Rule requireth.

2. Carefully obſerve in our ſelves or others, the firſt beginnings of ſtrife, which are as the letting out of waters, and if not prevented, will make a breach, like the Sea.

3. Sedulouſly apply our ſelves to the removall of the firſt appearance of diviſions; and in caſe of not prevailing, to conſult the Church.

4. Day-

4: Dayly to ſtrike at the root of all diſſention, by labouring for Univerſal conformity to Jeſus Chriſt.

V RULE.

SEparation and ſequeſtration from the world and men of the world, with all wayes of falſe worſhip, untill we be apparently a people dwelling alone, not reckoned among the Nations.

Numb. 23. 9. *Loe the people ſhall dwell alone, and ſhall not be reckoned among the Nations.*

John 15.19. *Ye are not of the world, but I have choſen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

2 Cor. 6.14. *Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers, for whatfellowſhip hath righteouſnes with unrighteouſneſſe? and what communication hath light with*

darkneſſe ? ver. 15. *And what concord hath* Chriſt *with* Belial; *or what part hath he that beleeveth with an Infidel ; and what agreement hath the Temple of God with* Idols, *for ye are the Temple of the living God?* v. 17. *Wherefore come out from among them, ſaith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you :* ver. 19. *and will be a father unto you, and you ſhall be my ſons and daughters, ſaith the Lord Almighty.*

Eph. 5, 8. *Walk as children of light.* v. 11. *And have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſſe.*

2 Tim. 3, 5. *Having a form of godlineſſe, but denying the power thereof ; from ſuch turn away.*

Hoſea 4. 15: *Though thou* Iſrael *play the harlot, yet let not* Iudah *offend, and come not ye to* Gil-

Gilgal, *neither goye up to* Beth-aven.

Revel. 18 4. *Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her ſins and that ye partake not of her plagues.*

Prov. 14.7. *Go from the preſence of a fooliſh man, when thou perceiveſt not in him the lips of knowledge.*

EXPL. V.

SEparation generally hears ill in the world; and yet there is a ſeparation ſutable to the minde of God: he that will not ſeparate from the world, and falſe-worſhip, is a ſeparate from Chriſt.

Now the ſeparation here commanded from any perſons, is not in reſpect of natural affections, nor ſpiritual care of the good of their ſoules, *Rom.* 9.3. nor yet in reſpect of duties of

Relation, 1 *Cor.*7.13.nor yet in offices of love and civill converſe, 1 *Cor.* 5.10. 1 *Theſ.*4.12. much leſſe in not ſeeking their good and proſperity, 1 *Tim.* 2. 1: or not communicating good things unto them *Gal.* 6. 10. or living profitably and peaceably with them, *Rom.* 12. 18. but in 1. Manner of walking and converſation, *Rom:* 12. 2. *Epheſ.* 4. 17, 18, 19. 2: Delightful converſe and familiarity where enmity and oppoſition appears, *Epheſ.* 5. 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11. 3. In way of worſhip, and ordinances of fellowſhip, *Rev.* 18. 4. not running out into the ſame compaſſe of exceſs and riot, with them, in any thing; for theſe 3: and the like commands and diſcoveries of the wil of God, are moſt expreſs: as in the places annexed to the rule;

neceſ-

neceſſity abundantly urgent; ſpiritual profit and edification, no leſſe requiring it. Cauſleſſe ſeparation from eſtabliſhed Churches, walking according to the order of the Goſpel, (though perhaps failing in the practiſe of ſome things of ſmall concernment) is no ſmall ſin: but ſeparation from the ſinful practiſes, and diſorderly walkings, and falſe unwarranted wayes of worſhip in any, is to fulfil the precept of not partaking in other mens ſins; to delight in the company of, fellowſhip, ſociety and converſe of unſavory diſorderly perſons, proclaimes a ſpirit not indeared to Chriſt.

Let motives hereunto, be,

1. Gods command.

2. Our own preſervation from ſin, and protection from puniſhment, that with others we be not infected and plagued.

3. Chriſts delight in the purity of his ordinances.

4. His diſtinguiſhing love to his ſaints; provided, that in the practiſe of this Rule, abundance of meekneſſe, patience, gentleneſſe, wiſdom and tenderneſſe be exerciſed: let no offence be given juſtly to any.

RULE VI.

FRequent ſpiritual communication, for edification according to gifts received.

Mal. 3. 16. *Then they that feared the Lord, ſpake often one to another, and the Lord hearkned and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, & thought upon his Name.*

Jod. 2. 11. *Now when* Job's *three friends heard al of this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place*

for

for they that had made an appoint-ment together, to come to mourn with him, and to comfort him.

Epheſ. 4. 39. *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the uſe of edifying, that it may adminiſter grace to the hearers.*

Col. 4. 6. *Let your ſpeech be alwayes with grace, ſeaſoned with ſalt, that you may know how to anſwer every man.*

Eph. 5. 4. *Neither filthineſs nor fooliſh talking, nor jeſting, which are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks.*

1 Theſſ. 5. 11. *Wherefore comfort ſelves together, and edifie one another, as alſo ye do.*

Heb. 3. 12. *Exhort one another daily, whileſt it is called to day, leſt any of you be hardened through the deceitfulneſſe of ſin.*

Jude 20. *Building up your ſelves in your moſt holy faith,*

praying in the Holy Ghoſt.

Heb. 10.24,25. *Let us conſider one another, to provoke unto love and good works: Not forſaking the aſſembling of our ſelves together, as the manner of ſome; but exhorting one another, and ſo much the more, as you ſee the day approaching.*

Acts 18. 13. *Whom when* Aquila *and* Priſcilla *had heard, they took him nnto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.*

1 Cor. 12.9. *For the manifeſtation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withall.*

EXPLIC. VI.

THat men not ſolemnly called and ſet apart to the office of publick teaching, may yet be endued with uſefull gifts for edification, was before declared; the not uſing of ſuch gifts, in

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an orderly way, according to the rule and cuſtome of the churches, is to napkin up the talent given to trade and profit withall; that every man ought to labour, that he may walk and dwell in knowledge, in his family, none doubts; that we ſhould alſo labour to do ſo in the church or Family of God, is no leſſe apparent.

This the Scriptures annexed to the rule, declare, which in an eſpeciall manner hold out prayer, exhortation, inſtruction from the Word, and conſolation; now the performance of this duty of mutuall edification, is incumbent on the Saints,

1. Ordinarily, *Epheſ.* 4.29. *chap.* 5.3.5. *Heb.* 3.13. believers in their ordinary daily converſe, ought to be continually making mention of the Lord; with ſavoury diſcourſes tending to

Relation, 1 *Cor.*7.13.nor yet in offices of love and civill converſe, 1 *Cor.* 5.10. 1 *Theſ.*4.12. much leſſe in not ſeeking their good and proſperity, 1 *Tim.* 2. 1: or not communicating good things unto them *Gal.* 6. 10. or living profitably and peaceably with them, *Rom.* 12. 18. but in 1: Manner of walking and converſation, *Rom:* 12. 2. *Epheſ.* 4. 17, 18, 19. 2: Delightful converſe and familiarity where enmity and oppoſition appears, *Epheſ.* 5. 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11. 3. In way of worſhip, and ordinances of fellowſhip, *Rev.* 18. 4. not running out into the ſame compaſſe of exceſs and riot, with them, in any thing; for theſe 3: and the like commands and diſcoveries of the wil of God, are moſt expreſs: as in the places annexed to the rule;

neceſ-

neceſſity abundantly urgent; ſpiritual profit and edification, no leſſe requiring it. Cauſleſſe ſeparation from eſtabliſhed Churches, walking according to the order of the Goſpel, (though perhaps failing in the practiſe of ſome things of ſmall concernment) is no ſmall ſin: but ſeparation from the ſinful practiſes, and diſorderly walkings, and falſe unwarranted wayes of worſhip in any, is to fulfil the precept of not partaking in other mens ſins; to delight in the company of, fellowſhip, ſociety and converſe of unſavory diſorderly perſons, proclaimes a ſpirit not indeared to Chriſt.

Let motives hereunto, be,

1. Gods command.

2. Our own preſervation from ſin, and protection from puniſhment, that with others we be not infected and plagued.

3. Christs delight in the purity of his ordinances.

4. His distinguishing love to his saints; provided, that in the practise of this Rule, abundance of meekness, patience, gentleness, wisdom and tenderness be exercised: let no offence be given justly to any.

RULE VI.

FRequent spiritual communication, for edification according to gifts received.

Mal. 3. 16. *Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkned and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, & thought upon his Name.*

Jod. 2. 11. *Now when* Job's *three friends heard al of this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place*

for

for they that had made an appoint-ment together, to come to mourn with him, and to comfort him.

Epheſ. 4. 39. *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, bnt that which is good to the uſe of edifying, that it may adminiſter grace to the hearers.*

Col. 4. 6. *Let your ſpeech be alwayes with grace, ſeaſoned with ſalt, that you may know how to anſwer every man.*

Eph. 5. 4. *Neither filthineſs nor fooliſh talking, nor jeſting, which are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks.*

1 Theſſ. 5. 11. *Wherefore comfort ſelves together, and edifie one another, as alſo ye do.*

Heb. 3. 12. *Exhort one another daily, whileſt it is called to day, leſt any of you be hardened through the deceitfulneſſe of ſin.*

Jude 20. *Building up your ſelves in your moſt holy faith,*

praying in the Holy Ghost.

Heb. 10.24,25. *Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works: Not forsaking the assembling of our selves together, as the manner of some; but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as you see the day approaching.*

Acts 18. 13. *Whom when* Aquila *and* Priscilla *had heard, they took him nnto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.*

1 Cor. 12.9. *For the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withall.*

EXPLIC. VI.

THat men not solemnly called and set apart to the office of publick teaching, may yet be endued with usefull gifts for edification, was before declared; the not using of such gifts, in an

an orderly way, according to the rule and custome of the churches, is to napkin up the talent given to trade and profit withall; that every man ought to labour, that he may walk and dwell in knowledge, in his family, none doubts; that we should also labour to do so in the church or Family of God, is no lesse apparent.

This the Scriptures annexed to the rule, declare, which in an especiall manner hold out prayer, exhortation, instruction from the Word, and consolation; now the performance of this duty of mutuall edification, is incumbent on the Saints,

1. Ordinarily, *Ephes.* 4.29. *chap.* 5.3.5. *Heb.* 3.13. believers in their ordinary daily converse, ought to be continually making mention of the Lord; with savoury discourses tending to

edification, and not waſt their opportunities, with fooliſh, light, frothy ſpeeches that are not convenient.

2. Occaſionally, *Luke* 24.14. *Mal.* 3.1.6. if any thing of weight and concernment to the Church, be brought forth by providence; a ſpiritual improvement of it, by a due conſideration amongſt believers, is required.

3. By aſſembling of more together by appointment, for prayer and inſtruction from the Word, *Acts* 18.23. *Acts* 12.12. *Job* 2.11. *Epheſ.* 5.19. *James* 5.16. *Jude* 20. 1 *Theſ.* 15.14. This being a ſpeciall ordinance and appointment of God, for the increaſing of knowledge, love, charity, experience, and the improving of gifts received; every one contributing to the building of the Tabernacle; let

then

then all vain communication be farr away: The time is ſhort and the daies are evil; let it ſuffice us, that we have neglected ſo many precious opportunities, of growing in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and doing good to one another: let the remainder of our few and evil dayes be ſpent in living to him who died for us; be not conformed to this world, nor the men thereof.

RULE VII.

MUtually to bear with each others infirmities, weakneſſe, tenderneſſe, failings, in meekneſſe, patience, pity, and with aſſiſtance.

Eph. 4. 32. *Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another; even as God for Chriſts ſake hath forgiven you.*

Mat. 18. 21. *Then came* Peter *to him,*

him, and ſaid, how oft ſhall my bro-ſin againſt me, and I forgive him. ver. 22. Jeſus *ſaid unto him, I ſay not unto thee ſeven times, but until ſeventy times ſeven.*

Mark 11.25. *And when you ſtand praying, forgive, if you have ought againſt any, that your Father which is alſo in Heaven may for-give you your treſpaſſes.* v.26. *And if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in Heaven, forgive you your treſpaſſes.*

Rom. 14.13. *Let us not there-fore judge one another any more, but judge this rather, that no man put a ſtumbling block, or an occa-ſion to fall in his brothers way*; ſee verſ. 3, 4.

Rom. 15.1. *We then that are ſtrong, ought to bear the infirmi-ties of the weak, and not to pleaſe our ſelves.* verſ. 2. *let every one pleaſe his neighbour for the good of edification.*

1 Cor. 13.4. *Charity ſuffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not, charity is not raſh, it is not puffed up.* ver. 5. *Doth not behave it ſelf unſeemly, is not eaſily provoked, thinketh no evil:* ver. 6. *Rejoyceth not in iniquity, but rejoyceth in the truth.* v. 7. *Beareth all things, beleeveth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

Gal. 6.1. *Brethren, if a man be taken in a fault, ye which are ſpiritual reſtore ſuch an one in the ſpirit of meekneſſe,* v. 2 *conſidering thy ſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted.*

Col. 3. 12. *Put on therefore (as the Elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindneſſe, humbleneſſe of minde, meekneſſe, long-ſuffering,* ver. 13. *Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel againſt any: even*

as Christ forgave you, so also do ye verſ. 14. *And above all theſe things put on chrity, which is the bond of perfection.*

EXPLIC. VII.

IT is the glory of God, to cover a matter, *Prov.* 25. 2. free pardon is the ſubſtance of the Goſpel; the work of God in perfection, *Eſa.* 55. propoſed to us for imitation, *Matth.* 18. 26,27,28. Whileſt we are cloathed with fleſh, we do al things imperfectly; freedom from failings is a fruit of glory; we ſee here darkly as in a glaſſe: know but in part, in many things we offend all: who knoweth how often? mutual failings to be born with, offences to be pardoned, weakneſſe to be ſupported, may minde us in theſe pence, of the Talents forgiven us: Let him that

that is without fault throw ſtones at others: *S*ome men rejoyce in others failings; they are malicious and faile more in that ſinful joys then their brethten in that which they rejoyce at. Some are angry at weakneſſes and infirmities; They are proud and conceited; not conſidering that they themſelves alſo are in the fleſh. Some delight to dwell alwayes upon a frailty; they deſerve to finde no charity in the like kinde: For injuries, who almoſt can bear untill ſeven times; *Peter* thought it much. Some more ſtudy revenge then pardon; ſome pretend to forgive, but yet every ſlight offence makes a continued alienation of affections, and ſeparation of converſe; Some will carry a ſmooth face over a rough heart. *C*hriſt is in none of theſe wayes; they have

no

no ſavour of the Goſpel; Meekneſſe, patience, forbearance and and forgiveneſſe, hiding, covering, removing of offences, are the foot-ſteps of Chriſt; ſeeſt thou thy Brother fail, pity him; doth he continue in it, earneſtly pray for him, admoniſh him; cannot another ſin, but you muſt ſin too? If you be angry, vexed, rejoyced, alienated from, you are partner with him in evil, inſtead of helping him; Suppoſe thy God ſhould be angry every time thou giveſt cauſe, and ſtrike every time thou provokeſt him? When thy brother offendeth thee, do but ſtay thy heart, untill thou taken a faithful view of the patience, and forbearance of God toward thee; and then conſider his command to thee, to go and do likewiſe: Let then all tenderneſſe of affection, and bowels

bowels of compaſſion towards one another, be put on amongſt us, as becometh Saints. Let pitty, not envie; mercy, not malice; patience, not paſſion; *Chriſt*, not fleſh; Grace, not nature; pardon, not ſpite or revenge, be our guides and companions in our converſations.

Motives hereunto are,

1. Gods infinite Mercy, Patience, Forbearance, Long-ſuffering, and free-grace towards us, ſparing, pardoning, pittying, bearing with us, in innumerable, daily, hourly failings and provocations; eſpecially all this being propoſed for our imitation, in our meaſure, *Matth.* 10. 28. 24.

2. The goodneſſe, unwearied and unchangeable love of the Lord Jeſus *Chriſt*, putting in every day for us; not ceaſing to plead in our behalf, notwithſtanding

ſtanding our continual backſliding, 1 *Iohn.*2.1.2.

3, The experience which our own hearts have of the need, wherein we ſtand of others patience, forbearance and pardon, *Eccleſ.*7.20.22.

4. The ſtrictneſſe of the command, with the threatnings attending its non-performance.

5. The great glory of the Goſpel, which is in the walking of the Brethren with a right-foot, as to this Rule.

RULE. VIII.

TEnder and affectionate participation with one another, in their ſeveral ſtates and conditions, bearing each others burthens.

Gal.6.2. *Bear you one anothers burthens, and ſo fulfil you the law of Chriſt.*

Heb.

Heb. 13.3. *Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them, and them that are in adverſity, as being your ſelves alſo in the body.*

1. Cor. 12.25. *That there ſhould be no ſchiſme in the body, but that the members ſhould have the ſame care one for another.* verſ. 26. *And whether one member ſuffer, all the members ſuffer with it, or one member be honored, all the members rejoyce with it.*

2 Cor. 11.29. *Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?*

James 1.21. *Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this; To viſit the fatherleſſe and widowes in their affliction, &c.*

Mat. 25.35. *I was an hungred and ye gave me meat: I was athirſt, and ye gavē me drink, I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in:*

Naked

Naked and ye clothed me: I was ſick, and ye viſited me: I was in priſon, and ye came unto me. verſ. 40. *For inaſmuch as you did it to one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

2 Tim. 1. 16. *The Lord give mercy unto the houſe of* Oneſiphorus; *for he oft refreſhed me, and was not aſhamed of my chain.* verſe 17. *But when he was in* Rome, *he ſought me out very diligently, and found me.*

Acts 20. 35. *I have ſhewed you all things, how that ſo labouring ye ought to ſupport the weak, &c.*

EXPLIC. VIII.

THe former Rule concerned the carriage and frame of ſpirits towards our Brethren in their failings. This is in their miſeries and afflictions; In this alſo, conformity to Chriſt is required,

required, who in all the afflictions of his people is afflicted, *Esa.* 63.9. and persecuted in their distresses, *Acts* 9.4. could we bring up our spiritual union, to hold any proportion with the mutuall union of many members in one body, tow^ch it is frequently compared; this duty would be excellently performed: no man ever yet hated his own flesh; if one member be in pain, the rest have little comfort or ease, it is a rotten member which is not affected with the anguish of its companions; they are marked particularly for destruction, who in the midst of plentifull enjoyments, forget the miseries of their brethren, *Amos* 6.6. if we will not feel the weight of our brethrens afflictions, burdens, and sorrow; it is a righteous thing that our own should be doubled; the desola-

tions

tions of the Church makes *Nehemiah* grow pale in the Court of a great King, *Neh.*1.10. they who are not concerned in the troubles, ſorrows, viſitations, wants, poverties, perſecutions of the Saints, not ſo farr as to pity their woundings, to feel their ſtrokes, to refreſh their ſpirits, help bear their burthens upon their own ſhoulders, can never aſſure themſelves, that they are united to the head of thoſe Saints; now to a right performance of this duty, and in the diſcharge of it, are required;

1. A due valuation, ſtrong deſire, and high eſteem of the Churches proſperity in every member of it, *Pſal.*122.6.

2. Bowels of compaſſion, as a fruit of love, to be ſenſible of, and intimately moved for, the ſeveral burthens of the Saints, *col.*3.19.

3. Courage

3. Courage and boldneſſe, to own them without ſhame in all conditions, 2 *Tim.*1.16,17.

4. Perſonall viſitations in ſickneſſes, troubles, and reſtraints, to adviſe, comfort and refreſh them, *Mat.*25.36.

5. Sutable ſupportment by adminiſtration of ſpirituall, or temporal aſſiſtances, to the condition wherein they are. The Motives are the ſame as to the former rule.

RULE IX.

FRee contribution, and communication of temporall things, to them that are poor indeed, ſutable to their neceſsities,wants,and afflictions.

1 1 John 3.17. *Who ſo hath the worlds goods, and ſeeth his Brother have need, and ſhutteth up his bowels of compaſſion from him,how dwelleth*

dwelleth the love of God in him. Verſ. 18. *My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, and in truth.*

1 Cor. 16. 1,2. *Now concerning the collection for the Saints, as I have given order to the Churches of* Galatia, *even ſo do ye. Upon the firſt day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in ſtore as God hath proſpered him.*

2. Cor. 9. 5,6. *Let your gift be ready as a matter of bounty, not covetouſneſſe; he that ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap ſparingly.* ver. 7. *Every man, according as he purpoſeth in his heart, ſo let him give, not grudgingly, or of neceſſity, for God loveth a cheerfull giver;* ſo the whole 8 and 9. chap. of this *Epiſtle.*

Rom. 12. 13. *Diſtributing to the neceſſity of the Saints, given to hoſpitality.*

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EXPLICAT. IX.

THE having of poor always amongſt us, and of us, according to our Saviours prediction, *Mat.* 26. 11. and the promiſe of God, *Deut.* 15. 11. ſerves for the trial of themſelves and others: of their own content, with Chriſt alone, with ſubmiſſion to the all-diſpoſing ſoveraignty of God; of others, how freely they can part for Chriſts ſake, with thoſe things wherewith their hand

hand is filled: when God gave *Manna*, for food unto his people, every one had an equall ſhare, *Exod.* 16.18. and he that gathered much, had nothing over, and he that gathered little, had no lack, 2 *Cor.*8.15. This diſtribution in equality, was again for the neceſſity of the Church, reduced into practiſe, in the dayes of the Apoſtles, *Acts* 14.35. of the totall ſum of the poſſeſſions of believers, diſtribution was made to every man according to his need.

That every man by the ordinance and appointment of God, hath a peculiar right to the uſe and diſpoſall of the earthly things wherewith he is in particular intruſted, is unqueſtionable: The very precept for free diſtribution, and communication, are enough to prove it; but that theſe things are altogether given to men, for themſelves

and their own uſe, is denied; friends are to be made of *Mammon*. Chriſt needs in ſome, what he beſtowes on others; if he hath given thee thine own, and thy brothers portion alſo to keep, wilt thou be falſe to thy truſt, and defraud thy Brother? Chriſt being rich, became poor for our ſakes; if he make us rich, it is that we may feed the poor for his ſake; neither doth this duty lie only (though chiefly) on thoſe who are greatly increaſed; thoſe who have nothing but their labour, ſhould ſpare out of that for thoſe who cannot work, *Eph.* 4.28. The two Mites are required as well as accepted. Now the relief of the poor Brethren in the Church, hath a two-fold Rule.

Firſt, Their neceſſity.

Secondly, Others abilities.

Unto theſe two muſt aſſiſtance be proportioned; provided, that

thoſ

thoſe which are poor walk ſuitably to their condition, 2 *Theſ.* 3. 10 11. And as we ought to relieve men in their poverty, ſo we ought, by all lawfull means, to prevent their being poor; to keep a man from falling, is an equall mercy to the helping of him up when he is down.

Motives to this duty are;

1. The love of God unto us, 1 *John* 3.14.

2. The glory of the Goſpel exceedingly exalted thereby, *Titus* 3.8.15. *Mat.*5.6.

3. The Union whereunto we are brought in Chriſt; with the common inheritance promiſed to us all.

4. The teſtimony of the Lord Jeſus, witneſſing what is done in this kind, to be done unto himſelf, *Mat.*25.35,36,37.

5. The promiſe annexed to it, *Eccleſ.* 11.1. *Prov.* 19.17.

*Deut.*15.10.*Mat.*10.42.

The way whereby it is to be done, is by appointing ſome, *Acts 6.* to take what is voluntarily diſtributed by the brethren, according as God hath bleſſed them; on the firſt day of the week, 1 *Cor.* 16.1. and to diſtribute to the neceſſity of the Saints, according to the advice of the Church; beſides private diſtributions wherein we ought to abound.*Mat.*6.3.*Heb.*13.16.

RULE. X.

TO mark diligently, and avoid carefully, all cauſes and cauſers of Diviſions; eſpecially to ſhun Seducers, falſe-Teachers, & Broachers of Hereſies and Errors, contrary to the form of wholſome words.

Rom.16.17,18. *Now I beſeech you brethren, mark them which cauſe diviſions and offences, contrary*

trary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them: For they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus, but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

Matth. 24. 4. *Jesus said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you:* vers. 5. *For many shall come in my Name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.* vers. 23. *Then if any man shall say unto you; Lo, here is Christ, or there: believe it not.* vers. 24. *For there shall arise false Christs, and false Prophets, and shall shew great signes and wonders: insomuch that (if it were possible) they shall deceive the very Elect.* vers. 25. *Behold I have told you before.*

1 Tim. 6. 3. *If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholsome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godlinesse:*

lineſſe : verſ.4. *He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about queſtions, and ſtrifes of words, whereof cometh envy, ſtrife, railings, evil ſurmiſings* : verſ.5. *Perverſe diſputings of men of corrupt minds, and deſtitute of the truth: From ſuch withdraw thy ſelf.*

2 Tim. 2. 16. *But ſhun prophane and vain bablings, for they will increaſe to more ungodlineſſe.* verſ. 17. *And their word will eat, as doth a canker.*

Titus 3. 9. *But avoid fooliſh queſtions and genealogies, and contentions, and ſtrivings about the Law; for they are unprofitable and vain.* verſ. 10. *A man that is an Heretick, after the firſt and ſecond admonition, reject:* verſ. 11. *Knowing that he that is ſuch, is ſubverted, and ſinneth, being condemned of himſelf.*

1 John 2. 18. *Little children, it*

it is the laſt time: and as ye have heard that Antichriſt ſhall come, even now there are many Antichriſts, whereby we know that it is the laſt times. verſ. 19. *They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifeſt, that they were not all of us.*

1 Iohn 4.1. *Beloved, believe not every ſpirit, but try the ſpirits whether they are of God; becauſe many falſe Prophets are gone out into the world.*

2 Joh. 10. *If there be any that come unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your houſes, neither bid him God ſpeed:* verſ. 11. *For he that biddeth him God ſpeed, is partaker of his evil deeds.*

Acts 20. 29. *For I know this,*

that after my departing, ſhall grievons Wolves enter in among you, not ſparing the flock, verſ. 30. *Alſo of your own ſelves, ſhall men ariſe, ſpeaking perverſe things, to draw away Diſciples after them:* verſ. 31. *Therefore watch.*

Rev. 2. 14. I *have a few things againſt thee, becauſe thou haſt there, them that hold the doctrine of* Balaam, verſ. 15. *So haſt thou alſo them, that hold the doctrine of the* Nicolaitans, *which thing I hate.* verſ. 16. *Repent, or elſe I ſhall come to thee quickly, and will fight againſt thee with the ſword of my mouth.*

EXPLICAT. X.

THe former part of this rule was ſomething ſpoken to rule 4. th If the preſervation of unity ought to be our aime, then certainly the cauſes and

and Cauſers of Diviſion, ought to be avoided; *From ſuch turn away.* There is a generation of men, whoſe tongues ſeem to be acted by the Devill; *James* calls it, *Set on fire of hell*, Chap. 3. 6. As though they were the meer of-ſpring of Serpents, they delight in nothing but in the fire of contention; diſputing, quarrelling, backbiting, endleſſe ſtrivings, are that they live upon. *Note ſuch men and avoid them*; Generally they are men of private Intereſts, fleſhly ends, high conceits, and proud ſpirits; *from ſuch turn away*: For the latter part of the Rule in particular, concerning Seducers; That a judgement of diſcerning by the ſpirit, reſts in the Church, and the ſeverall Members thereof, is apparent, 1 *Joh.* 2. 27. 1 *Cor.* 2. 15. *Iſa.* 8. 28. To the exerciſe of this duty they are commanded, *Jo.* 5.

1. 1 *Cor.* 10. 15. So its commended, *Acts* 17. 11 And hereunto are they encouraged, *Phi.* 1. 9. 10. *Heb.* 5, 14 If the blind lead the blind, both will into the ditch: That gold may be ſuſpected, which would not be tryed. Chriſtians muſt chuſe the good, and refuſe the evil. If their Teachers could excuſe them, if they lead them aſide, they might well require blind ſubmiſſion from them. Now that the Brethren may exerciſe this duty aright, and perform obedience to this Rule, it is required,

1. That they get their ſences exerciſed in the word, to diſcern good and evil, *Heb.* 5, 14. Eſpecially, that they get from the Scripture a form of wholſome words, 2 *Tim.* 1. 13. of the main Truths of the Goſpel, and fundamentall Articles of Religion; So that upon the firſt apprehenſion

hénſion of the contrary, they may turn away from him that brings it, and not bid them God ſpeed, 2 *Epiſt John* verſ 10.

2. That they attend and hearken to nothing, but what comes to them in the way of God: Some men, yea very many in our dayes, have ſuch itching ears after novelty, that they run greedily after every one *that lies in wait to deceive, with cunning entiſing words* to make out ſome new pretended revelations; and this from a pretended liberty, yea, *duty* of trying all things; little conſidering that God will have his own work done, onely in his own way: How they come it matters not, ſo they may be heard: moſt of the Seducers and falſe Prophets of our dayes, are men apparently out of Gods way, leaving their own callings, to wander withour a call, ordi-

nary

nary or extraordinary, without providence or promiſe; For a man to put himſelf, voluntarily, uncalled, upon the hearing of them, is to tempt God, with whom it is juſt and righteous, to deliver them up to the efficacie of Error, that they may believe the lies they hear. Attend only then to, and try only that which comes in the way of God, to others bid not God ſpeed.

3. To be alwayes ready furniſhed with, and to bear in mind the Characters, which the Holy Ghoſt hath given us in the word, of Seducers; which are indeed the very ſame, whereby poor unſtable ſouls are Seduced by them; As firſt, that they ſhould come in ſheeps cloathing, goodly pretences of innocency and holineſſe. Secondly, with good words and fair ſpeeches, *Rom.* 16. 17, 18. *Smooth*

as

as butter and oil. Thirdly, answering mens lusts in their Doctrine, 2 *Tim.* 4.3. Bringing Doctrines sutable to some beloved lusts of men, especially a broad and easie way of salvation. Fourthly, pretences of glorious discoveries and revelations, *Mat.*24.24. 2 *Thes.*2.2.

4 Utterly reject and separate from such as have had means of conviction and admonition, *Tit.* 3.10.

5. Not to receive any without testimony from some of the brethren of known integrity in the Churches; such is the misery of our dayes, that men will run to hear those, that they know not from whence they come, nor what they are; the laudable practise of the first Churches, to give testimonials to them that were to passe from one place to another, 1 *Cor.*16.3.

and

and not to receive any without them, *Acts* 9.26. is quite laid aside.

6. To walk orderly, not attending to the Doctrine of any, not known to, and approved by the Churches.

7. To remove far away all delight in novelties, disputes, janglings, contentions about words not tending to godlineſſe, which uſually are beginnings of fearfull apoſtacies, *Tit.* 3.9. 2 *Tim.* 4. 3. 1 *Tim.* 2. 3. 4,5.

RULE XI.

CHeerfully to undergo the lot and portion of the whole Church in proſperity and affliction, and not to draw back upon any occaſion whatever.

Matth. 13 20 *But he that receiveth the ſeed into ſtony places, the*

the ſame is he that heareth the Word, and anon with joy receiveth it, verſ. 21. *Yet hath he not root in himſelf, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or perſecution ariſeth becauſe of the word, by and by he is offended.*

Heb. 10. 23. *Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering, for he is faithfull that promiſeth.* verſ. 24. *And let us conſider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works,* verſ. 25. *Not forſaking the aſſembling our ſelves together, as the manner of ſome is, but exhorting one another, and ſo much the more, as you ſee the day approaching.* verſ. 32. *But call to remembrance the former dayes, in which after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of affliction.* verſ. 33. *Partly while ye were made a gazing ſtock both*

by

by reproaches and afflictions, and partly whileſt ye became companions of them that were ſo uſed. verſ. 34. *For ye had compaſſion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the ſpoiling of your goods: knowing in your ſelves, that ye have in Heaven an enduring ſubſtance:* verſ. 35. *Caſt not away therefore your confidence, which hah great recompence of reward.* verſ. 36. *For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promiſes.* verſ. 37. *For yet a little while, and he that ſhall come will come; and will not tarry.* verſ. 38. *Now the juſt ſhall live by faith, but if any man draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him.* ver. 39. *But we are not of them which draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the ſaving of the ſoul.*

2 Tim. 4.

2 Tim. 4. 10. *For* Demas *hath forſaken me, having loved this preſent world.* verſ. 16. *At my firſt anſwer, no man ſtood with me, but all men forſook me; I pray God that it be not laid unto their charge.*

EXPLIC. XI.

BAck-ſliding from the practiſe of any way of Chriſt, or uſe of any ordinances, taken up upon conviction of his Inſtitution, is in no ſmall degree an Apoſtacy from Chriſt himſelf.

Apoſtacie, in what degree ſoever, is attended with all that aggravation which a renuntiation of a taſted ſweetneſſe and goodneſſe from God for tranſitory things, can lay upon it; ſeldom it is that back-ſliders are without pretences. Commonly of what they forſake, in reſpect of what they pretend

pretend to retein, they ſay, as *Lot* of *Zoar*, is it not a little one? But yet we ſee (without exception) that ſuch things univerſally tend to more ungodlineſſe: Every unrecovered ſtep-backward, from any way of Chriſt, maketh a diſcovery of falſeneſſe in the heart, what ever former pretences have been.

They who, for Motives of any ſort from things that are ſeen, which are but temporall, will ſeek for, or imbrace being preſented, colours or pretences for declining from any Goſpel-duty, will not want them for the reſidue, if they ſhould be tempted thereunto.

The beginnings of great evils are to be reſiſted: that the neglect of the duty whereof we treat, which is always accompanied with contempt of the communion

munion of Saints, hath been a main cauſe of the great diſhonour and confuſion whereunto moſt Churches in the world are fallen, was in part touched before; it being a righteous thing with God, to ſuffer the ſons of men to wax vain in their imaginations; in whom, neither the love of Chriſt, nor terror of the Lord, can prevail againſt the fear of men.

Let this then, with the danger and abomination of backſliding, take ſuch an impreſſion on the hearts of the Saints, *that with full purpoſe of heart, they might cleave unto the Lord, follow hard after him*, in all his ordinances; that if perſecution ariſe, they may cheerfully follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goes; and by their cloſe adhering one to another, receive ſuch mutuall aſſiſtance and ſupportment, as

that

that their joynt prayers may prevail with the goodneſſe of God, and their joynt ſufferings overcome the wickedneſſe of men.

Now to a cloſe adhering to the Church wherein we walk in fellowſhip, in all conditions whatſoever, without diſmiſſion attain'd upon juſt and equitable grounds, for the imbracing of Communion in ſome other Churches.

Motives are;

Firſt, The eminency and excellencie of the ordinances enjoyed.

Secondly, The danger of back-ſliding, and evidence of unſoundneſſe in every degree thereof.

Thirdly, The ſcandall, confuſion, and diſorder of the churches, by neglect thereof.

RULE

RULE XII.

IN Church affairs to make no difference of perſons, but to condiſcend to the meaneſt perſons and ſervices, for the uſe of the brethren.

James 2. 1. *My Brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt the Lord of glory, with reſpect of perſons.* verſ. 2. *For if there come one unto your aſſemblies, a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparell, and there come in alſo a poor man in vile raiment;* verſ. 3. *And ye have reſpect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and ſay unto him, ſit thou here in a good place: and ſay to the poor man, ſtand thou there, or ſit here under my foot-ſtool:* verſ. 4. *Are ye not then partiall in your ſelves, and are become Judges of evill thoughts?* verſ. 5. *Hearken my be-*

beloved Brethren; Hath not God choſen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom, which he hath promiſed to them that love him? verſ.6. *But ye have deſpiſed the poor, &c.*

Matth.20.26. *But it ſhall not be ſo amongſt you, but whoſoever will be great amongſt you, let him be your Miniſter.* verſ. 27. *And whoſoever will be chief among you, let him be your ſervant.*

Rom.12.16. *Be of the ſame mind one towards another; mind not high things, but condiſcend to men of low eſtate; be not wiſe in your own conceits.*

John 13.12. *So after he had waſhed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was ſet down again, he ſaid unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?* verſ.13. *Ye call me Maſter, and Lord, and ye ſay well; For ſo I am.* verſ.14. *If I then, your Lord and Maſter*

have

have waſhed your feet, ye ought alſo to waſh one anothers feet. verſ. 15. *For I have given you an example, that ye ſhould do even as I have done.* verſ. 16. *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, The ſervant is not greater then his Lord, neither he that is ſent, greater then him hat ſent him.*

EXPLIC. XII.

WHere the Lord hath not diſtinguiſhed, neither ought we; in Jeſus Chriſt, there is heither rich, nor poor; high, nor low; but a new creature: generally, God hath choſen the poor of this world to confound the mighty.

Experience ſhewes us, that not many great, not many wiſe, not many mighty after the fleſh, are partakers of the heavenly calling; not that the Goſpel of

Christ doth any way oppose or take away those many differences and distinctions among the sons of men, caused by *power*, *authority*, *relation*, enjoyment of *earthly* blessings, *gifts*, *age*, or any other *eminency* whatsoever, according to the institution and appointment of God, with all that *respect*, *reverence*, *duty*, *obedience*, and *subjection* due unto persons in those distinctions; much lesse, pull up the ancient bounds of proprietie, and intereſt in earthly things; but only declares, that in things purely spirituall, these outward things, which for the most part, happen alike unto all, are of no value or esteem; men in the Church are considered as Saints, and not as great, or rich; all are equall, all are naked before God.

Free-Grace is the onely distinguisher,

ſtinguiſher, all being *Brethren* in the ſame Family, *Servants* of the ſame Maſter; imployed about the ſame *work*; acted by the ſame precious *Faith*, enjoying the ſame purchaſed *Priviledges*, expecting the ſame recompence of *Reward*, and eternal abode: Whence ſhould any difference ariſe? Let then the *Greateſt* account it their *greateſt* honour, to perform the *meaneſt* neceſſary ſervice to the meaneſt of the Saints; a community in all ſpirituall advantages, ſhould give equality in ſpirituall affairs; Not he that is richeſt, not he that is pooreſt, but he that is humbleſt, is accepted before the Lord.

Motives hereunto, are

1. Chriſts example.
2. Scripture-precepts.
3. Gods not accepting perſons.

4. Joynt participation of the ſame common Faith, Hope, *&c.*

5. The unprofitableneſſe of all cauſes of outward differences in things of God.

RULE XIII.

IF any be in diſtreſſe, perſecution or affliction, the whole Church is to be humbled, and to be earneſt in prayer in their behalf.

Acts 12.5. *Peter therefore was kept in priſon, but prayers were made without ceaſing unto God for him.* verſ.7. *And behold, the Angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light ſhined in the priſon: and he ſmote* Peter *on the ſide, and raiſed him up, ſaying, Ariſe up quickly; And his chains fell off from his hands.* verſe 12. *And when*

when he had conſidered the thing, he came to the houſe of Mary *the Mother of* John, *who ſurname was* Mark, *where many were gathered together praying.*

Rom. 12. 15. *Rejoyce with them that do rejoyce, and weep with them that weep.*

1 Cor. 12. 26. *And whether one Member ſuffer, all the Members ſuffer with it, or one Member be honored, all the Members rejoyce with it.* verſ. 27. *Now ye are the Body of Chriſt, and Members in particular.*

2 Theſ. 3. 2. *Pray for us Brethren, that we may be delivered from unreaſonable and wicked men.*

EXPLIC. XIII.

THis duty being in generall made out from, and included in other former rules, we

ſhall need to ſpeak the leſſe unto it; eſpecially, ſeeing that upon conſideration and ſuppoſition of our fellow-Member-ſhip, it is no more then very Nature requireth & calleth for. God delighteth, as in the thankfull praiſes ſo in the fervent prayers of his Churches; Therefore he variouſly calleth them by ſeverall diſpenſations to the performance of theſe duties: Now this oft-times, to ſpare the whole Church, he doth by the afflictions of ſome one or other of the Members thereof; Knowing that, that neer relation, which by his inſtitution and Spirit is between them, will make the diſtreſſe common, and their prayers cloſely combined. Spirituall union is more noble and excellent then naturall; And yet in this it were monſtrous, that either any Member in particular,

or

or the whole in generall, ſhould not both ſuffer with, and care for the diſtreſſe of every part and Member. That Member is rotten and to be cut off, for fear of infecting the body, which feels not the pain of its aſſociates: If then any Member of the Church, do lie under the immediate afflicting hand of God, or the perſecuting rage of man, it is the duty of every fellow-Member, and of the Church in generall, to be ſenſible of, and account themſelves ſo ſharers therein, as to be inſtant with God by earneſt ſupplication, and helpfull to them by ſutable aſſiſtance, that their ſpirituall concernment in that affliction, may be apparant; and that becauſe Firſt, the will of God is thereby fulfill'd. Secondly, The glory of the Goſpel is thereby exalted. Thirdly, preſervation and

deliverance to the whole Church procured. Fourthly, conformity with Christs sufferings in his Saints attained. Fiftly, an ineſtimable benefit of Church-fellowſhip injoyed, *&c.*

RULE XIV.

VIgilant watchfulneſſe over each others converſation, attended with mutuall admonition, in caſe of diſorderly walking; with rendring an account to the Church, if the party offending, be not prevailed with.

Matth. 18. 15. *If thy Brother ſhall treſpaſſe againſt thee, go and tell him his fault, betweene thee and him alone: if he ſhall hear thee, thou haſt gained thy brother:* verſ. 16. *But if he will not hear, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three*

three witneſſes, every word may be eſtabliſhed: verſ. 17. *and if he ſhall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church.*

1 Theſ. 5. 14. *Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them who are unruly.*

Heb. 3. 12. *Take heed brethren, leſt there be in any of you an evill heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.* verſ. 13. *But exhort one another daily, whileſt it is called to day; leſt any of you be hardened through the deceitfulneſſe of ſin.*

Heb. 10. 24. *And let us conſider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works, exhorting one another, and ſo much the more, becauſe you ſee the day approaching.*

Heb. 12. 13. *Make ſtrait paths for your feet, leſt that which is lame be turned out of the way, but rather let it be healed.* verſ. 15.

Looking diligently, leſt any man fail of the grace of God, leſt any root of bitterneſſe ſpringing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled: verſ. 17. *Leſt there be any fornicator, or prophane perſon among you, like* Eſau, *who for one morſell of bread, ſold his birth-right.*

Levit. 19. 17. *Thou ſhalt not hate thy brother in thy heart, thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy neighbour, and not ſuffer ſin upon him.*

2 Theſ. 3. 15. *Yet account him not as an enemy, but admoniſh him as a brother.*

Rom. 15. 14. *And I my ſelf alſo am perſwaded of you, my brethren, that ye alſo are full of goodneſſe, filled with all knowledge, able alſo to admoniſh one another.*

James 5. 19. *Brethren, if any of you do erre from the faith, and one convert him, let him know, that he which converteth a ſinner*

from

from the error of his way, ſhall ſave a ſoul from death, and ſhall hide a multitude of ſins.

Prov. 29. 1. *He that being often reproved ſtiffeneth his neck, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed, and that without remedy.*

EXPLIC. XIV.

THere is a three-fold dutie included in this rule, the maine whereof, and here chiefly intended, is that of Admonition; whereunto the firſt is previous and conducing; the latter, in ſome caſes conſequent, and attending Chriſtians converſation; whether you conſider the glory of God, and the Goſpel, therein concerned; or the bonds of relation, with thoſe mutuall endearments wherein they ſtand ingaged; and obligations.

ions that are upon them for the ;enerall good, and ſpirituall dification one of another, This luty is of eminent neceſſity and aſefulneſſe. Not that we ſhould curiouſly prie into one anothers failings; much leſſe maliciouſly ſearch into doubtfull unknown things; for the trouble, or diſparagement of our brethren; both which are contrary to that love, which thinketh not evil, but covereth a multitude of faults, but only out of a ſenſe of the glory of God, the honour of the Goſpel, and care of each others ſouls; we are to obſerve their walking, that what is exemplary therein may be followed; what faileth may be directed; what is amiſſe may be eproved, that in all things God nay be glorified, and Chriſt exalted.

Now admonition is two-fold;

1. Authori-

1. Authoritative, by the way of power; 2. Fraternal, by the way of love. The 1. again is two-fold; 1. Doctrinall by the way of teaching. 2. Diſciplinary, which belongeth to the whole Church; Of theſe we do not treat. The latter alſo is two-fold; *Hortatory*, to encourage unto good; and *Monitory*, to reprove that which is amiſſe: It is this laſt which is peculiarly aimed at, and intended in the rule. This then we aſſert, as the duty of every Church-member towards them with whom he walks in fellowſhip; to admoniſh any from the Word, whom they perceive not walking in any thing with a right foot, as becometh the Goſpel, thereby to recover his ſoul to the right way, that much caution and wiſdom, tenderneſſe and moderation is required in the perſons perform-

ing

ing this duty; for want whereof, it often degenerates from a peaceable remedy of evil, into fuell for ſtrife and debate is granted. Let them then, who are called to perform this duty, diligently conſider theſe things; 1. That in the whole action he tranſgreſſe not that rule of charity which we have, 1 *Cor.*13.7. *Gal.*6. 2. Let him have peace at home, by an aſſurance of conſtant labouring to caſt out all beams and moates from his own eye, *Mat.*7.5. 3. Let him ſo perform it, that it may evidently appear, that he hath no other aim, but the glory of God, and the good of his brother reproved; all envy and rejoycing in evil being farr away. 4. Let him be ſure to draw his admonitions from the Word, that the authority of God may appear therein, and without a Word

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let him not preſume to ſpeak. 5. Let all circumſtances attending, time, place, perſons, and the like, be duely weighed, that all provocation in the leaſt manner, may be fully avoided. 6. Let it be conſidered as an ordinance whereunto Chriſt hath an eſpecial regard, 7. Let him carefully diſtinguiſh between perſonall injuries unto himſelf, whoſe mention muſt have farr more of forgiveneſſe, then reproof, and other offences tending to publick ſcandall. Laſtly, Let ſelf-examination concerning the ſame or the like miſcarriage, alwayes accompany the brotherly admonition.

Theſe and the like things being duly weighed, let every brother, with Chriſtian courrage, admoniſh from the Word, every one whom he judgeth to walk diſorderly in any particular whatſoever;

ever; not to ſuffer ſin upon him, being ready to receive content and ſatisfaction, upon juſt defence, or promiſed amendment: and without this, in caſe of juſt offence, a man cannot be freed from the guilt of other mens ſins: *L*et alſo the perſon admoniſhed, with all Chriſtian patience, accept of the admonition, without any more regret of ſpirit, then he would have againſt him who ſhould break the weapon wherewith he was in danger to be ſlain: Conſidering,

1. The authoritie of him who hath appointed it.

2. The priviledge and mercy he enjoyeth by ſuch a ſpirituall prevention of ſuch a danger, or out of ſuch an evill, which perhaps himſelf did not diſcern.

3. The dreadful judgements which are every where threatned to deſpiſers of reproofs, *Prov.29.*

Prov. 29. 1. and ſo thankfully accept juſt admonition from the meaneſt in the Congregation.

For the laſt, or repairing unto the Church in caſe of not prevailing by private admonition; our Saviour hath ſo plainly laid down both the manner and end of proceeding in *Mat.* 18. that it needeth no explanation; only I ſhall obſerve, that by Church there, *ver.* 17. cannot be underſtood the Elders of the Church alone, but rather the whole Congregation; for if the offended brother ſhould take with him two or three of the Elders unto the offender (as he may) then were they the Church, and the Church ſhould be told of the offence before the reproof hath been managed by two or three, which is contrary to the rule.

RULE:

RULE XV.

Exemplary walking in all holineſſe, and godlineſſe of converſation, to the glory of the Goſpel, edification of the Church, and conviction of them which are without.

Pſal. 24. 3. *Who ſhall aſcend into the hill of the Lord, or who ſhall ſtand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lift up his ſoul unto vanity, nor ſworn deceitfully.*

Matth. 5. 16. *Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorifie your Father which is in heaven.* ver. 20. *For I ſay unto you, except your righteouſneſſe ſhall exceed the righteouſneſſe of the Scribes and Phariſees, ye ſhall in no wiſe enter into the Kingdom of heaven.*

Mat. 21. 19. *And when he ſaw a fig-*

a fig-tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and ſaid unto it, let no fruit grow on thee hence forward for ever, &c.

2 Cor. 7. 1. *Having therefore theſe promiſes (dearly beloved) let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſſe of fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſſe in the fear of God.*

2 Tim. 2. 19. *And let every one, that nameth the Name of Chriſt, depart from iniquity.* Tit. 2. 11, 12. *For the grace of God that bringeth ſalvation, hath appeared unto all men; teaching us, that denying ungodlineſſe and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world.* ver. 14. *Who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* Eph. 4. 21, 22, 23. *If ſo be that ye have heard him, and have been taught him,*

him, as the truth is in Jesus, That ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitfull lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind. 1 Pet. 3. 1, 2. *Likewise ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the Word, they also may without the Word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chast conversation coupled with fear.* Heb. 12. 14. *Follow peace with all men, and holiuesse, without which no man shall see the Lord.* Ephes. 5. 15, 16. *See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise; Redeeming the time, because the dayes are evil.* 2 Sam. 12. 14. *Howbeit because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also, that is born unto thee, shall surely die.*

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EXPLIC. XV.

HOlineſs becometh the houſe of the Lord for ever, without it none ſhall ſee God: Chriſt died to waſh his Church, to preſent it before his Father without ſpot or blemiſh, to purchaſe unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works. It is the Kingdom of God within us, and by which it appeareth unto all, that we are the Children of the Kingdom. Let this then be the great diſcriminating Charactor of the Church, from the world, that they are a holy, humble, ſelf-denying people: Our Maſter is holy, his Doctrine and Worſhip holy; Let us ſtrive that our hearts may alſo be holy.

This is our wiſdom towards them that ars without, whereby they may be gained, or convinced,

ced; this is the means whereby we builded up one another moſt effectually. Examples are a ſharper way of inſtruction then Precepts; Looſe walking cauſing the Name of God to be blaſphemed, the little ones of Chriſt to be offended,& his enemis to rejoyce, is attended with moſt dreadfull woes. Oh, that all who are called to an holy profeſsion, and do enjoy holy Ordinances, did ſhine alſo in holineſſe of converſation, that thoſe who accuſe them as evil doers, might have their mouths ſtopt, and their hearts fill'd with ſhame, to the glory of the Goſpel. To this general head belongeth wiſe walking in all patience, meekneſs, and long-ſuffering towards thoſe that are without, until they evidently appear to be fighters againſt God; when they are to be prayed for. Hither alſo might

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be referred the patience of the Saints in all tribulations, ſufferings, and perſecutions for the Name of Chriſt.

Motives for the exerciſe of univerſal holineſſe in acts internal and external, private and publick; perſonal, and of all relations, are,

1. The utter unſufficiency of the moſt precious Ordinances, for any communion with God, without it,

2. The miſerable iſſue of deceived ſouls, with their barren empty, fruitleſſe Faith.

3. The glory of the Goſpel, when the power thereof hath an evident impreſſion on the hearts, thoughts, words, actions and lives of Profeſſors.

4. Scandal of the Goſpel, the advantage of its adverſaries, the ſhame of the Church, and fierce wrath of God, following the unſutable

ſuteable walking of the profeſſors.

5. The ſweet reward which the practice of holineſs bringeth along with it, even in this life; with that eternall weight of glory, whereunto it leadeth hereafter; unto which the holy Son of God bring us all, through the ſprinkling of his moſt holy bloud.

And theſe are ſome of thoſe Rules, whoſe practice is required from the perſons, and adorneth the profeſſion of thoſe who have obtained this grace, to walk together in Fellowſhip, according to the Rule of the Goſpel; Towards others alſo ought they, with ſeverall limitations, and in the full latitude towards the brechren of the Congregations in communion with them to be obſerved.

FINIS.